



NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

KC MAN PLEADS GUILTY IN 'REVERSE STING' OPERATION FOR METH, 400 POUNDS OF MARIJUANA

KANSAS CITY, Mo. – Todd P. Graves, United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, announced today that a Kansas City, Mo., man pleaded guilty in federal court today to participating in a conspiracy to distribute five kilograms of methamphetamine and 400 pounds of marijuana. The case resulted from a “reverse sting operation,” Graves said, in which a law enforcement officer delivered a tractor-trailer load of marijuana and methamphetamine to the defendants.

Jacob L. Deal, 24, of Kansas City, pleaded guilty before U.S. District Chief Magistrate Judge John T. Maughmer this afternoon to charges contained in a Nov. 21, 2003 indictment.

By pleading guilty, **Deal** admitted that he arranged for the purchase of five kilograms of methamphetamine and 400 pounds of marijuana from a confidential informant who was working with law enforcement. **Deal** is one of six co-defendants who have pleaded guilty.

Damon D. Franklin, 26, of Kansas City, was sentenced to 15 years and eight months in federal prison without parole on Aug. 19, 2004. The court sentenced **Franklin** as a career offender, Graves explained, due to his prior felony convictions for burglary and attempted burglary. On May 5, 2004, **Damon Franklin** pleaded guilty to possession with intent to distribute 100 kilograms or more of marijuana.

James D. Fugate, 20, of Kansas City, was sentenced to three years and 10 months in federal prison without parole on Aug. 18, 2004. On May 24, 2004, **James Fugate** pleaded guilty to possession with intent to distribute 100 kilograms or more of marijuana.

Co-defendants **Deandre Fugate**, 22, and **David Searcy**, 27, both of Kansas City, also pleaded guilty on May 24, 2004, to the same charge. Co-defendant **Brandon L. Franklin**, 21, of Kansas City, pleaded guilty to the same charge on May 5, 2004. They await sentencing hearings.

By pleading guilty, the co-defendants admitted that they met at the Ameristar Casino on Oct. 7, 2003, and traveled together to a warehouse in Kansas City to receive the shipment of narcotics.

The co-defendants were arrested in a reverse sting operation in which an undercover law enforcement officer drove the tractor-trailer load of marijuana, which was unloaded by the defendants, after the drug deal was arranged through a confidential informant. **Deal** admitted that he paid the informant \$3,000 as a down payment for the methamphetamine and marijuana.

Under federal statutes, **Deal** could be subject to a mandatory minimum sentence of 10 years in federal prison without parole, up to life imprisonment, plus a fine up to \$4 million. A sentencing hearing will be scheduled after the completion of a presentence investigation by the United States Probation Office.

This case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney David M. Ketchmark and Special Assistant U.S. Attorney Matthew P. Wolesky. It was investigated by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, the Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement, the Jackson County Drug Task Force and the Kansas City, Mo., Police Department.

This news release, as well as additional information about the office of the United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, is available on-line at

www.usdoj.gov/usao/mow